



## [ Our Views ]

# Building from within

*Roosevelt Square construction didn't sideline neighborhood residents*

All too often, publicly funded construction projects in Chicago attract pickets from aggrieved, unemployed or underemployed neighborhood residents wondering why they didn't end up on the job site. It's understandable that the residents would take to the streets, given that many construction projects, including the CHA's massive Plan for Transformation, are being financed with considerable support from the taxpaying public.

But happily, the collaboration between LR Development and West Side 2000, a Near West Side nonprofit that specializes in job training, has created a vastly different picture for the construction of Roosevelt Square.

Charged with training and placing a little more than 50 employees for Roosevelt Square, West Side 2000 has used a variety of training programs to prepare the trainees, primarily Near West Side residents, for work on the project. Most of the workers have been placed in construction jobs and security posts, and some of those who have been hired have been able to qualify for the CHA's requirement that former public housing residents moving into replacement housing units work at least 30 hours a week. In addition, West Side 2000 has been working on UIC's South Campus extension for over five years, so they didn't lack for experience when they entered into the Roosevelt Square effort.

Beyond the tangible benefits of linking up former public housing residents with hands-on experience that could lead them to other jobs, the inclusion of so many future Roosevelt Square residents in the process of building their own future homes can't but help ensure the quality of said homes.

One of the former ABLA residents, Jozette Daugherty, learned about the opportunity through a West Side 2000 flier a couple years back, and is now the assistant project manager at Roosevelt Square for LR Development. These days, she's in charge of the final walkthroughs LR does on individual housing units before making them available to the public, and says she knows exactly what she wants when she ultimately moves back into the neighborhood.

All told, given the massive amount of planning and negotiating that went into Roosevelt Square over a period of several years, it's heartening to see that the residents of the Near West Side weren't forgotten when it came time to build it.



## [ City scene ]



September 9, 2005. 11:18 a.m. 18th and Miller.

## A flood of memories, a re

In January of 1998, I returned home one Saturday night, after being gone for about three hours, to find water streaming down the cedar siding of my house. My home had sprung a leak.

My windows were all fogged up, and when I opened the back door, voluminous amounts of clean water were pouring from the ceiling. On the first and second floors, I was in water up to my ankles, and it was just starting to seep into the basement. I called a neighbor, who rushed over and showed me how to turn off the main water supply, toting over two shop-vacs to start slurping up the liquid that had engulfed my house.

It turned out later that a faucet in the master bathroom on the second floor had suddenly broken off, and was shooting water like a

the next morning and set up powerful fans to dry everything out. The house wasn't even damaged, aside from some faint tell-tale marks of dry wall tape on the ceilings.

Even though the insurance company offered to repair these things, I declined. Like a facial wrinkle, I wanted to keep those symbols on the inside of the house to remind me of life lived, the lessons learned and how lucky I am.

I know three people who lived good lives in New Orleans three weeks ago. One—my mother's cousin—has packed up with children and grandchildren and moved



BONNIE Mc...